

WEEKLY

industry and society

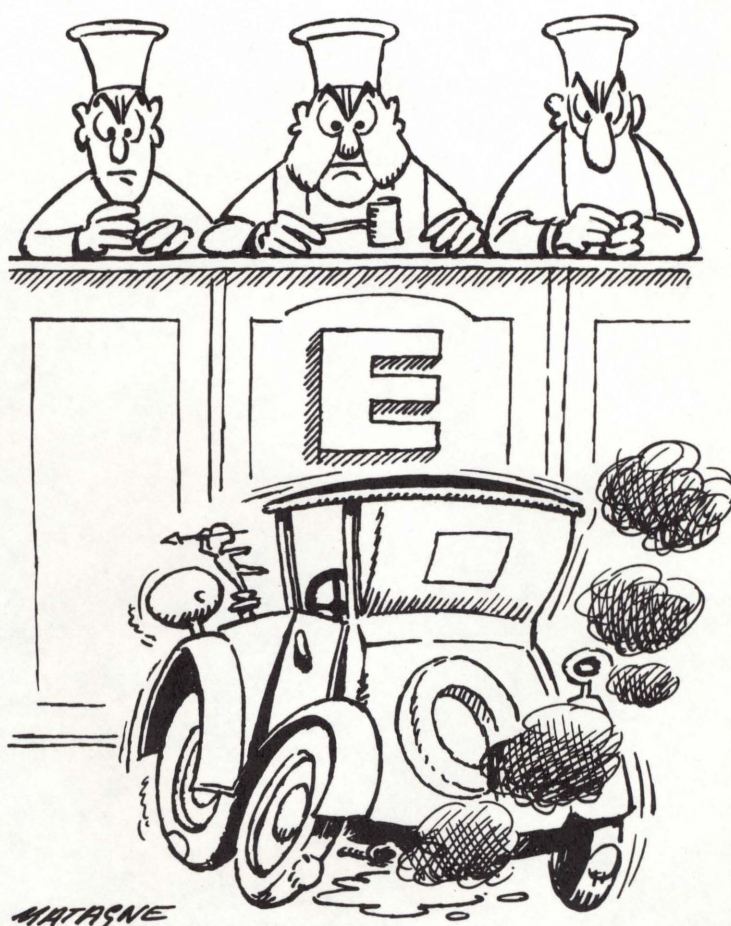
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Because of the holiday period the next issue of "Industry and Society" (No 45/75, 23 December 1975), an index to items published in 1975, will be the last this year.

It will also be the last issue to appear as "Industry and Society". The bulletin has been re-christened "Euroforum - Europe Day by Day" and the first issue to bear this title (No 1/76) will be dated 6 January 1976.

- ** CARS MUST CHANGE. Threatened by the economic crisis, under fire from consumers and challenged by conservationists, the car is in a manner of speaking being forced to change. The gist of what went on at the European Symposium on Trends in Regulations concerning Motor Vehicle Design, recently held in Brussels at the initiative of the European Commission, is given in ANNEX 1.
- ** Four of the European Community's nine Ministers for Public Health are women. Is this a coincidence? The European Health Club has just held a congress in Brussels on the topic of "WOMEN AND HEALTH", its way of marking the end of International Women's Year. ANNEX 2 outlines the main points made at this congress.
- ** Discussion at the ENVIRONMENT meeting of the European Community's Council of Ministers on 8 December 1975 was largely devoted to ways of reducing pollution caused by certain dangerous substances discharged into the aquatic environment. The Ministers agreed that the best way of tackling the problem is to fix Community "emission standards", that is to define the quantity of dangerous substances which may be discharged. The "quality objectives" approach can however be used to deal with particularly dangerous substances. The European Commission will notify the Council of instances where it has accepted this approach. The Council also authorized the European Commission to take part in the negotiations for the Convention on protection of the Rhine against chemical pollution. In this connection the agreement reached on the problem of reducing pollution of the aquatic environment is particularly significant since the negotiating mandate given to the Commission states explicitly that the draft Convention must be phrased in such a way that the Community can sign it. In other words, the Convention must take account of the Council of Ministers' decision.
- ** The main problems discussed by the STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT when it met recently in Brussels will re-appear on the agenda for the Council of Ministers meeting on social affairs scheduled for 18 December. Heading the list is the principle of equal treatment for men and women workers as regards access to employment, training and professional advancement. Equal treatment is the logical follow-up to equal pay and we all know what resistance that encountered. The Standing Committee on Employment, which groups Community Ministers, the European Commission, and representatives of employers and workers, approved the general approach of the proposal prepared by the European Commission. Next on the

list of problems of interest to both bodies comes intervention by the European Social Fund. In the Standing Committee's debate both sides of industry stressed the importance they attach to the measures envisaged by the Commission, and in particular to action to promote the geographic and professional mobility of persons employed in the textile and clothing industries (see I&S No 37/75). Other issues discussed by the Standing Committee were youth employment and illegal immigration. The European Commission confirmed that emergency action would be taken on illegal immigration.

** A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT meeting of the Community's Council of Ministers on 15 December will examine the priorities selected by the European Commission for the next five years (see I&S No 42/75). The Commission's communication recommends that the Community's research effort should concentrate on resources (energy, agriculture, raw materials), the environment (criteria for pollutants, prevention of pollution, nature conservation), economic and industrial development (data processing, the aircraft industry, iron and steel, textiles etc.) and the life of society (biomedical research, urban development, transport and telecommunication systems, social research etc.).

** The latest figures from the Statistical Office of the European Communities indicate that in October the CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (1970 = 100) stood at 136.3 in Germany, 156.3 in France, 175.8 in Italy, 156.3 in the Netherlands, 154.0 in Belgium, 146.2 in Luxembourg, 194.9 in the United Kingdom and 155.4 in Denmark. In Ireland the index is calculated every three months; the last available figure - for August - was 187.1.

In the other eight countries the increase between September and October was 1.6% in Luxembourg, 1.4% in the United Kingdom, 1.1% in Italy and Belgium, 0.8% in France and the Netherlands and 0.3% in Germany; Denmark was exceptional - the index there fell by 2.5%. The pattern last year (that is to say between September and October 1974) was quite different: there was a 2% increase in the United Kingdom, 1.9% in Italy, 1.3% in the Netherlands and Denmark, 1.2% in France, 1.0% in Luxembourg, 0.9% in Belgium and 0.5% in Germany. This means that in all Community countries except Belgium and Luxembourg the consumer price index rose less rapidly between September and October 1975 than in the corresponding period of 1974.

** The list of COLOURING MATTERS which may be used in foodstuffs is to be amended once again. The European Commission, on the advice of the Scientific Committee for Foodstuffs, has just proposed that nine colouring matters be banned from 1 January 1978. Advances in science and technology have shown that not enough is known about these colouring matters and that it is impossible to evaluate their toxicity. The wisest course therefore seems to be to delete them from the approved list on the understanding that this decision will be reviewed if research sheds more light on their properties. This is the fifth time that the list of authorized colouring matters has been amended since it was first compiled in 1962.

- ** FIELD OF VISION is an important factor in road safety. The European Commission recently presented a proposal to the Community's Council of Ministers containing specifications relating to the driver's field of vision in private cars. Vehicle designers will have to meet these specifications if their cars are to be sold throughout the Community. The Commission's proposal is not only concerned with the safety of European drivers. It also takes international standards into account so that European manufacturers will not be handicapped in the export stakes.
- ** IS TOURISM A THREAT TO THE ENVIRONMENT? It may well be, particularly in coastal areas. It seems, for instance, that the oyster-farmers of Arcachon, on the west coast of France, are complaining about the growing number of pleasure-boats which are upsetting the ecological balance of the region. As part of the action programme on the environment, the European Commission is to undertake a study of problems peculiar to coastal areas. These areas are being affected not only by tourism but also by urban development and industrial expansion which could change the landscape and destroy animal and plant habitats. The Commission's study, which should pin-point potential ecological imbalances, will be referred to a group of national experts and will be followed, if necessary, by specific proposals to the Council of Ministers. The result might well be a "coast code" which would define aims and principles to guide action by the nine Community countries to protect their coastlines.
- ** To prevent WATER BEING SOLD AT THE SAME PRICE AS CHICKEN the European Commission has proposed common standards which would limit the water content of frozen and deep-frozen fowl carcasses to 8%. Once this proposal has been adopted by the Council of Ministers consumers will know exactly what they are buying, poultry farmers will be assured of free and fair competition, and exporters will have a better chance of finding a market outside the Community.
- ** Those noisy MOTORCYCLES will soon be a thing of the past. The European Commission has just presented a proposal to the Council of Ministers for a directive which would limit noise levels to eighty decibels for motorcycles of 50 c.c. or less and eighty-six decibels for motorcycles of 500 c.c. or more. Designers would have until 1 October 1978 to conform to these requirements. After that date, new motorcycles would be subjected to extremely rigorous tests and only those which passed with flying colours could be sold without difficulty in all Community countries.
- ** Work begun as far back as 1959, at the instigation of the European Commission, on the development of a EUROPEAN LAW on PATENTS has come to fruition with the signing in Luxembourg of the convention on a Community patent. For Community countries this convention is an indispensable adjunct to the convention on a European patent signed in Munich in 1973 by sixteen European countries. The European patent is a "group" patent which has the same effect in each of the signatories to the European Patent Convention as a patent issued under national regulations. The Community patent on the other hand

introduces a unitary patent law which means that from the moment of issue a European patent will be subject to the same regulations in all nine Community countries. The Community patent is a unitary one: any decision to transfer or revoke one will apply to the whole Community. One of the main objectives of the Luxembourg convention is to remove territorial obstacles to the movement of patented products which is why compartmentalization of the common market will be forbidden; products protected by a Community patent will enjoy freedom of movement as soon as the patent-holder puts them on the market anywhere in the Community. Transitional provisions have been included however. For ten years an applicant will be free to choose between a Community and a European patent; it is possible that he might want his product protected in one or two European states only. The European Commission has already warned Member States against taking any action which could restrict the scope of the convention's economic clauses; it has pointed out that such action would be incompatible with Community law.

** Dosimeters used in RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION were compared at a number of trials organized by the European Commission and France's Commissariat à l'Energie atomique. Dosimetry experts from more than twenty national institutes in Community countries were able to test and compare techniques and apparatus not only under exposure conditions common to nuclear power stations but also under optimum measurement conditions. These trials make a notable contribution to the protection of workers at risk and of the general public.

CARS MUST CHANGE

In the nine countries of the European Community (242 million inhabitants) 58 000 people are killed and 1 600 000 injured in road accidents every year. This wholesale slaughter has prompted the authorities to step up road safety campaigns. But campaigns are not enough: a complete re-think is necessary and this includes taking a new look at the way cars are designed. It was to encourage long-term planning in the car industry that the Commission recently organized a motor vehicle symposium which was attended by delegates representing public authorities, manufacturers, consumers, specialized laboratories, research institutes, universities and so on. The main topics discussed were safety standards, protection of the environment and savings in energy and raw materials.

Safety

Road safety must take a close look at the three factors involved in traffic: pedestrians, vehicle occupants and vehicles themselves. In some countries sixty pedestrians are killed for every hundred vehicle occupants. Accidents involving vehicles and pedestrians are so common that the only effective way of reducing their number is to keep pedestrians and vehicles completely apart.

It is extremely difficult to modify vehicles to protect the pedestrian. However the design of the front is of major importance for obvious reasons. The initial impact, usually caused by the bumper, should ideally be below the knee. But this would mean modifying bumper height and there is no provision for this in either existing or proposed regulations.

The safety belt is the best known method of protecting vehicle occupants. Mr Mackay, of Birmingham University, claimed that if everyone wore a safety belt fatalities among vehicle occupants could be reduced by 50%.

Following the example set by Australia and New Zealand, France became a pioneer in Europe in 1973 when it enacted legislation which made the wearing of safety belts compulsory outside towns; this regulation should now be extended to urban areas as well. The wearing of safety belts was made compulsory in the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark this year; Sweden and Norway have enacted similar legislation. It will become compulsory in Germany on 1 January 1976 from which date all vehicles manufactured after 1972 will have to be fitted with belts.

The United Kingdom may well adopt similar legislation within the next two years. The effects of this should be felt very rapidly since 95% of vehicles on British roads are already fitted with safety belts. There is no immediate sign of either Italy or Ireland following suit.

Surveys in France, Australia, New Zealand and Sweden indicate that the rate of effective use of safety belts ranges from 60% to 90%, depending on place and time of day. It seems that

the rate declines after dark and, even in countries where the wearing of belts is compulsory, the rate of effective use among persons involved in accidents is never higher than 80% and is even lower than this for high-speed collisions at night.

This reluctance to wear safety belts means that something must be done to make them more comfortable and therefore more acceptable. Improvements which could be made in the immediate future are: an adjustable upper anchorage point and/or belt guides on the back of the seat; lower anchorage points which shift with the seat; belts which can be fastened and unfastened with one hand.

Standards and rules

Proposing uniform standards and rules for the European Community is particularly ticklish since the situation varies so much from country to country. The following table illustrates these differences without explaining them; it indicates vehicle occupants killed per million vehicles in 1971 in five countries:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Deaths per million vehicles</u>
Germany	677
France	605
Italy	499
United States	435
Britain	261

Mr Mitschke, of the Technische Hochschule Braunschweig, felt that only 2 to 3% of accidents could be attributed to the deficiencies of vehicles themselves. On the whole accidents were caused by drivers, by traffic situations, by road conditions and by bad weather. The designer should therefore concentrate on adapting vehicles to human beings, traffic and bad weather to increase active road safety and reduce accidents.

In Mr Mitschke's view the new Community regulations should deal not with vehicles in isolation but rather in association with that less than perfect instrument, the driver. The Community Directive on braking devices was a first step in this direction since it places the emphasis on vehicle behaviour, braking distance and ease of steering in that order to allow for drivers' shortcomings in controlling their vehicles.

Mr Mackay felt that most of the indispensable design standards had already been, or were about to be, introduced in the Community. But these were just the "first generation" of statutory provisions. The time had come, he said, to review their effectiveness and undertake an exploratory study of a "second generation" of standards with a view to assessing probable effectiveness and solving the problems posed by potential conflict with other requirements.

During the symposium many speakers stressed the importance of keeping up a coordinated and varied research effort so that legislators would be in a position to do something more than merely rubber-stamp models already on the market.

The environment

Nobody denies that the environment is adversely affected by vehicle traffic though there are differences of opinion on what can be done about it. For example, three different emission levels for nitrogen oxides are considered desirable in the United States: 2.0 g/mile by 1978/79 (the Environment Protection Agency) 3.1 g/mile between 1977 and 1981 (the President) and 1.5 g/mile from 1977 (the State of California).

Professor Sibenaler, of Belgium's Ecole royale militaire, believes that responsibility for controlling pollutant vehicle emissions (hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, etc.) must be shared. A city's pollution problem could not be solved by vehicle designers alone. Public health authorities, central and local government, and vehicle users had their part to play too. A sense of civic responsibility was needed.

Mr Thiry, of France's Union technique de l'automobile, also advocated close collaboration between the authorities, the car industry, town planners, architects and sociologists in the fight against noise. The Community Directive on motor vehicle noise only came into force three years ago, and it is obviously too early to assess its effects on the environment. Similar legislation has been in force in France since the early sixties however and there noise levels quickly fell by seven to ten decibels (A) for utility vehicles and by six to eight decibels (A) for private vehicles. Designers have taken this to heart and a look at heavy utility vehicles will give some idea of the advances which have been made: over the last twelve to thirteen years, the average horsepower of these vehicles has risen from 150 metric h.p. to 250 metric h.p., but despite this considerable boost in horsepower noise levels have been kept more or less constant.

Research carried out in recent years has made it possible to pinpoint the origin of vehicle noise: engine noise accounts for 30%, efflux noise (radiator) for 20%, efflux noise (exhaust) for 25%, induction noise for 10%, cooling fan noise for 10% and road noise for the remaining 5%.

In recent years efforts have been concentrated on reducing induction and efflux noise, with the result that these are now minimal in comparison with noise produced directly by the engine.

What then is to be done about the engine? Two systems have been considered. The first solution would be to place the engine inside a sound-proof shell. However, engines have to be cooled and a sound-proof shell hinders this. Although some progress has been made here, Mr Thiry believes that designers will probably opt for a compromise - the use of partial

sound-proofing baffles which are less effective but more manageable. The second approach to the engine noise problem would be to study the causes of vibration in the components of the engine block and endeavour to reduce them. This approach is more rational but calls for lengthy research.

Incidentally, Mr Thiry stressed that an effort should be made to educate drivers: generally speaking a style of driving which avoids noise is easy on petrol.

Energy and raw materials

An economical style of driving was also called for by Mr Sezzi, of Italy's Snamprogetti, in his report on the rational use of energy and raw materials. The first advantage of this style of driving was that it prolonged a vehicle's life. In 1973 the average life of a vehicle was 8.3 years in Belgium, 9.3 in Ireland, 11.0 in the Netherlands, 11.2 in Germany, 11.4 in France, 11.8 in Britain, 12.9 in Denmark and 14.3 in Italy.

However, what drivers do only has a short-term effect. If energy consumption is to be reduced - and it seems that this is technically possible - a number of factors will have to be tackled at the same time. Saving fuel is only one aspect of the problem: saving raw materials is just as important but progress here can only be expected in the medium and long term.

In his concern to save energy and raw materials, Mr Sezzi pushed his argument to its logical conclusion and suggested that vehicles should be specifically designed for their final journey to the scrapyard so that recycling and the separation of non-metal materials could be conducted under the best possible conditions.

One point was made quite clear at the symposium: the motor car is not about to vanish from the scene: constantly improved and constantly criticized, its day is far from being over.

WOMEN AND HEALTH

Four of the European Community's nine Ministers for Public Health are women: Barbara Castle (UK), Katharina Focke (Germany), Simone Veil (France) and Irene Vorrinck (Netherlands). There are not that many female ministers so it is hardly a coincidence that so many of them have been given the public health portfolio. The European Health Club Congress on "Women and Health", held under the auspices of the European Commission and the Belgian Public Health Ministry, revealed several little-known aspects of the importance of health problems for women.

Did you know, for example, that there were a large number of physician-priestesses in ancient Egypt? With the advent of Hippocrates, medicine lost its religious character and gradually became a male preserve. It is odd that even today very few women are to be found in certain branches of medicine, such as surgery, orthopaedics, urology, gastro-enterology ...

Another surprising fact is that the comprehensive approach proposed by the European Health Club is virtually without precedent. It seems that no medical congress has ever dealt systematically with woman's genetic, biological and physiological identity, the nature-culture conflict in woman and woman's role in health promotion. However "Women and Health" was far from being a purely medical congress. It was wide open to the public in keeping with the European Health Club's aims, namely to provide a forum for meetings and exchanges not only for health specialists but also for those responsible for our physical, mental and social environment and the general public.

Dr Hillery, Vice-President of the European Commission with special responsibility for social affairs, opened the Congress and noted that medicine was the first of the professions for which freedom of establishment and freedom to provide services are to be assured in the enlarged Community - by 17 December 1976.

This decision he said, was of interest to the 438 000 doctors practising in the European Community.

The concern shown by Dr Hillery for the well-being and health of Europeans was echoed in discussions: numerous speakers urged that progress towards cooperation on the health front in Europe be speeded up without losing sight of the specific demands which had been voiced by women throughout the European Community.

The results of a survey on "The Frenchwoman and Health" were made public in the presence of Françoise Giroud, French State Secretary for Women's Affairs. Surprisingly, health only came eighth in the list of factors contributing to happiness: it was well behind standard of living, an interesting job and family life; it was regarded as almost on a par with housing and education, but was well ahead of changing attitudes to sex. The main advantage of good health in Frenchwomen's eyes is that it prolongs life. The most common "feminine" health problems were listed as tiredness, colds and "nerves" in that order.

At the end of the Congress a Belgian section of the European Health Club (82, chaussée de Vleurgat, B-1050 Bruxelles) came into being officially. The European Health Club, whose President is Mr Ribeyre, a former French Minister of Public Health, has its headquarters in France - 41, boulevard de Latour Maubourg, Paris 7.